REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner makes note of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure. In addition, the Examiner objects to the disclosure, stating that "the specification such as on page 3 should not refer to the claims for its support."

Claims 30-59 are pending in the application, of which Claims 30 and 52 are independent. In the Office Action, Claims 52-59 are allowed. Claims 30, 33, 34, 37, 38, 43, 45, and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,458,228, issued to Olsson (hereinafter "Olsson"). In addition, Claims 31, 32, 35, 36, 39-42, 44, and 47-51 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner notes that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Claim 48 is further objected to for failure to provide proper antecedent basis for a recited element.

Claim Amendments

Claim 48 is presently amended to depend from Claim 47 instead of Claim 46, thereby providing proper antecedent basis for "the carrier."

Specification Amendments

The Abstract is presently amended to comply with language and format requirements. In addition, the disclosure is amended to delete portions that rely on the claims for support.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 30, 33, 34, 37, 38, 43, 45, and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Olsson. Further, Claims 31, 32, 35, 36, 39-42, 44, and 47-51 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. For at least the reasons set forth below, applicants respectfully submit that Olsson does not disclose all of the features of the rejected claims.

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Accordingly, applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Olsson is directed to a device for carrying an endless carrier belt, wherein the device includes two rails 9 and 10 arranged below the lowermost turn of a belt pile. The rails 9 and 10 support "a plurality of rolling-bearing units in the form of ball-bearing units 11." (Col. 3, lines 5-7.) As shown in Figs. 4 and 5 of Olsson, the ball-bearing units 11 comprise an inner plate 12 and an outer plate 13, separated by a spacer plate 14. The plates 12-14 cooperate to form an endless ball track 18 in which a plurality of balls 21 are contained. The upper track section 19 of the endless ball track 18 is positioned in relation to the plates 12 and 13 so that a plurality of balls 21, which are movable in and around the ball track 18, project above the upper boundary surfaces of the plates 12 and 13.

Independent Claim 30 recites a support installation for an at least partly self-supporting conveyor belt, wherein the support installation includes "at least one bearing element for supporting the conveyor belt." In contrast to the disclosure of Olsson, Claim 30 further recites that "the at least one bearing element is a roller bearing element comprising a plurality of first and second rollers."

In the Office Action, the Examiner supports the rejection of Claim 30 by equating the balls 21 of Olsson with the first and second rollers recited in Claim 30. Applicants note that the scope of claims in a patent application is determined by giving claims their broadest reasonable construction "in light of the specification as it would be interpreted by one of ordinary skill in the art." *In re Am. Acad. of Sci. Tech. Ctr.*, 367 F.3d 1359, 1364 (Fed. Cir. 2004). In this regard, applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not interpret the scope of Claim 30 to include the ball-bearing units 11 disclosed in Olsson.

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It is well known in the art that ball-bearings and a roller bearings are particular types of rolling bearings. Rolling bearings transfer load between two or more pieces by positioning round elements between the pieces. Relative motion between the pieces causes the round elements to rotate, reducing the amount of friction caused by the motion. For ball-bearings, the round elements are spherical balls. Because each ball is a sphere, contact between the ball and the pieces is limited to a very small area. As previously noted, Olsson explicitly teaches the use of ball-bearings, specifically disclosing "a plurality of rolling-bearing units in the form of ball-bearing units 11." (Col. 3, lines 5-7.)

In contrast to ball-bearings, roller bearings utilize round elements (i.e., "roller bearing elements") that are generally shaped like cylinders or tapered cylinders. As a result, contact between the roller bearing elements and the pieces occurs as a line instead of a point. Because the load is spread over a larger area, a roller bearing can support a greater load than a comparable ball-bearing.

In view of the above-noted distinction between ball-bearings and roller bearings, applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art, when interpreting the claims in light of the specification, would not find the scope of the claims to include the ball-bearings disclosed by Olsson. In this regard, the present specification explicitly points characteristics of the claimed roller bearing elements that are not provided by a ball-bearing elements. In particular, the specification states the following:

> A special advantage of this aspect of the inventive supporting installation is that the force transmission from the conveyor belt to the section occurs via the bearing element in the form of a roller bearing element, whereby the transmission of force is effected by line contact with the bearing element. The design of the bearing element thus makes it possible to

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reduce frictional forces while at the same time overloading of the bearing element can be prevented owing to said line contact.

(Specification at page 4, lines 12-20.)

The ball-bearing units 11 disclosed by Olsson do not provide transmission of force through line contact with a bearing element (the ball 21). Thus, when viewed in light of the specification, it is clear that the scope of the "roller bearing element comprising a plurality of first and second rollers" recited in Claim 30 does not include the ball-bearing units 11 of Olsson.

For at least the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that Olsson fails to teach or suggest a support installation that includes "at least one bearing element for supporting the conveyor belt," wherein "the at least one bearing element is a roller bearing element comprising a plurality of first and second rollers," as recited in Claim 30. Further, one of skill in the art would find no apparent reason to modify the teachings of Olsson to arrive at the subject matter recited by Claim 30. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that Claim 30 is neither anticipated by nor obvious in view of Olsson, and request the withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Olsson. If Claim 30 is allowed, then Claims 31-51, which depend therefrom, should also be allowed.

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Closure

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully submit that Claims 31-51 are in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action allowing these claims is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at 206.695.1705 with any questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR
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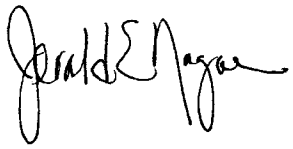

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